

not, there will be affordable choices for you that cannot be taken away. We will protect Medicare, we will not raise taxes on the middle class, and we will not add a dime to the deficit.

Mr. President, debates are great. But the reason—my being a trial lawyer—you have a judge determining what happens in a trial is because the judge makes sure what takes place is honest from both parties. Here we do not have that kind of a judge. So people can come to the floor and make the most false accusations, and it is up to us to explain to the American people whether what they are saying is true. Just because someone comes to this floor and says something, it does not mean it is true. And the complaint of my friends on the other side of the aisle about Michigan and Rhode Island and Oregon and Nevada getting special consideration is false.

Mr. President, I ask the Chair to put the Senate in recess at this time.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:38 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Acting President Pro Tempore.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will come to order.

The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the rule XXVIII point of order to be raised by Senator MCCAIN against the Legislative Branch appropriations bill.

I voted against this bill the first time it came through the Senate and now it is even worse. In fact, we violated one of our new ethics rules we talk so much about in the Senate and in the House where these conference bills cannot contain a provision that was not part of either the House or Senate bill. We call that "air dropping." But we air-dropped some significant things into this bill, violating our own ethics rule.

First, we added a 1-month continuing resolution that funds our government since we haven't finished our work here

in the Congress, but we also added a \$4 billion bailout for the Postal Service into this conference report bill, again, violating our own ethics rule. The air-dropped provisions are undemocratic. There was no debate or transparency. Like earmarks, it is another tactic politicians use to have an end run around our constitutional limits.

It is also wrong for Congress to fund itself while allowing all other government agencies to operate under a short-term continuing resolution. In 1995, President Clinton vetoed the legislative branch bill for this reason:

Congress should not take care of its own business before it takes care of the people's business.

If we are going to pass a continuing resolution, it should cover the entire government until we can have a transparent process that the American people can see. The only reason these tricks are pulled is that politicians don't want people to see what we are doing.

Even worse than the process that has been used for this legislation are the policies contained within it. Around the country, families and businesses are having to tighten their belts because of the recession. Many are out of work. At the same time, we are increasing our budgets dramatically here. This legislative branch bill itself has increased nearly 6 percent versus last year, despite the growing debt and the serious economic problems we are having as a country.

Just a couple of statistics from the bill: We have increased spending 128 percent for the House office buildings; a 155-percent increase for the Government Printing Office; a 6.2-percent increase for the Senate whip offices; a 4.3-percent increase for Senate leader offices; a 4.1-percent increase for Speaker PELOSI's office; a 4.3-percent increase in the Vice President's office; and don't forget a \$200,000 earmark for a museum in Nebraska.

If we were in prosperous times and had plenty of money, surpluses, then perhaps some of these increases would make sense, but not at a time when we see all Americans hurting and having to tighten their belts.

This is one of the smaller increases compared to the ones that have gone through in the last couple of weeks. We are spending our Nation into bankruptcy. Our debt is almost as large as our entire economy, and growing by \$1 trillion every year. Long-term deficits for Medicare and Social Security are more than \$100 trillion. We have no idea how we are going to keep our promises to seniors. When will all this end?

The head of the World Bank, a former U.S. Trade Representative, is questioning whether the U.S. dollar will long remain the world's reserve currency because of our spending and because of our debt. A few weeks ago I noted that some officials in Zimbabwe were concerned about America, our spending and our debt, and what could

happen to our currency. They have good reason to. A friend of mine who returned from Zimbabwe brought me one piece of their currency. This is a 100 trillion dollar bill from Zimbabwe. It is so worthless he gave it away as a souvenir. They are worried about our debt. We need to be worried about it too.

This bill also includes a \$4 billion bailout for the Postal Service, the third bailout they have gotten in 8 years. But the money is not contingent on any reforms within the Postal Service, so the underlying waste will continue and require another bailout in the next year or two. Why would we bail out the Postal Service without any requirement that they reform their policies, the policies that have led to this mess? There are some very obvious things we could do. We could save \$50 million by stopping paying employees an average of 45,000 hours of standby time. We could close unnecessary post offices. There is a long list of things we could do to reform the Post Office so that we don't continue to bail them out with taxpayer money, but there is nothing in this bill about doing that. It is only another bailout, another giveaway. So simply bailing them out will only prolong the problems and cost the taxpayers more money.

In sum, if we look at the legislative branch bill, it is bad policy, it has followed a bad process, and it continues this out-of-control spending and debt for our country. It does not deserve our vote.

I thank you, Mr. President, and I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Does the Senator from Nebraska withdraw his request?

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Without objection, yes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I wish to spend a little bit of time today talking to my colleagues and the American people about where we are. I don't know of a better description of where we are than this sign. The President said and some in the House have said that certain facts about health care reform are indisputable, but nobody will dispute this one: Forty-three cents out of every dollar we spend this year, we borrow against the future of our children; 43 cents out of every dollar the Federal Government spends. What does that come to per family? What that comes to is \$15,603 per family—every family in this country—we borrowed against this year.

The reason I came down to the floor—I have a lot of problems with both the CR and this bill, but I want to know where the leadership is in America today. We are in tough times, and if